

*sedentary* or *light* work, we will find that you cannot make an adjustment to other work unless you have skills that you can transfer to other skilled or semiskilled work (or you have recently completed education which provides for direct entry into skilled work) that you can do despite your impairment(s). We will decide if you have transferable skills as follows. If you are of advanced age and you have a severe impairment(s) that limits you to no more than *sedentary* work, we will find that you have skills that are transferable to skilled or semiskilled sedentary work only if the sedentary work is so similar to your previous work that you would need to make very little, if any, vocational adjustment in terms of tools, work processes, work settings, or the industry. (See §416.967(a) and Rule 201.00(f) of appendix 2 of subpart P of part 404 of this chapter.) If you are of advanced age but have not attained age 60, and you have a severe impairment(s) that limits you to no more than *light* work, we will apply the rules in paragraphs (d)(1) through (d)(3) of this section to decide if you have skills that are transferable to skilled or semiskilled light work (see §416.967(b)). If you are *closely approaching retirement age* (age 60 or older) and you have a severe impairment(s) that limits you to no more than *light* work, we will find that you have skills that are transferable to skilled or semiskilled light work only if the light work is so similar to your previous work that you would need to make very little, if any, vocational adjustment in terms of tools, work processes, work settings, or the industry. (See §416.967(b) and Rule 202.00(f) of appendix 2 of subpart P of part 404 of this chapter.)

[45 FR 55621, Aug. 20, 1980, as amended at 65 FR 18001, Apr. 6, 2000; 73 FR 64197, Oct. 29, 2008]

**§416.969 Listing of Medical-Vocational Guidelines in appendix 2 of subpart P of part 404 of this chapter.**

The *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* includes information about jobs (classified by their exertional and skill requirements) that exist in the national economy. Appendix 2 provides rules using this data reflecting major functional and vocational patterns. We

apply these rules in cases where a person is not doing substantial gainful activity and is prevented by a severe medically determinable impairment from doing vocationally relevant past work. The rules in appendix 2 do not cover all possible variations of factors. Also, as we explain in §200.00 of appendix 2, we do not apply these rules if one of the findings of fact about the person's vocational factors and residual functional capacity is not the same as the corresponding criterion of a rule. In these instances, we give full consideration to all relevant facts in accordance with the definitions and discussions under vocational considerations. However, if the findings of fact made about all factors are the same as the rule, we use that rule to decide whether a person is disabled.

**§416.969a Exertional and non-exertional limitations.**

(a) *General.* Your impairment(s) and related symptoms, such as pain, may cause limitations of function or restrictions which limit your ability to meet certain demands of jobs. These limitations may be exertional, non-exertional, or a combination of both. Limitations are classified as exertional if they affect your ability to meet the strength demands of jobs. The classification of a limitation as exertional is related to the United States Department of Labor's classification of jobs by various exertional levels (sedentary, light, medium, heavy, and very heavy) in terms of the strength demands for sitting, standing, walking, lifting, carrying, pushing, and pulling. Sections 416.967 and 416.969 explain how we use the classification of jobs by exertional levels (strength demands) which is contained in the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* published by the Department of Labor, to determine the exertional requirements of work which exists in the national economy. Limitations or restrictions which affect your ability to meet the demands of jobs other than the strength demands, that is, demands other than sitting, standing, walking, lifting, carrying, pushing or pulling, are considered non-exertional. When we decide whether you can do your past relevant work (see §§416.920(f) and 416.994(b)(5)(vi)), we will

compare our assessment of your residual functional capacity with the demands of your past relevant work. If you cannot do your past relevant work, we will use the same residual functional capacity assessment along with your age, education, and work experience to decide if you can adjust to any other work which exists in the national economy. (See §§416.920(g) and 416.994(b)(5)(vii).) Paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section explain how we apply the medical-vocational guidelines in appendix 2 of subpart P of part 404 of this chapter in making this determination, depending on whether the limitations or restrictions imposed by your impairment(s) and related symptoms, such as pain, are exertional, non-exertional, or a combination of both.

(b) *Exertional limitations.* When the limitations and restrictions imposed by your impairment(s) and related symptoms, such as pain, affect only your ability to meet the strength demands of jobs (sitting, standing, walking, lifting, carrying, pushing, and pulling), we consider that you have only exertional limitations. When your impairment(s) and related symptoms only impose exertional limitations and your specific vocational profile is listed in a rule contained in appendix 2, we will directly apply that rule to decide whether you are disabled.

(c) *Nonexertional limitations.* (1) When the limitations and restrictions imposed by your impairment(s) and related symptoms, such as pain, affect only your ability to meet the demands of jobs other than the strength demands, we consider that you have only nonexertional limitations or restrictions. Some examples of nonexertional limitations or restrictions include the following:

- (i) You have difficulty functioning because you are nervous, anxious, or depressed;
- (ii) You have difficulty maintaining attention or concentrating;
- (iii) You have difficulty understanding or remembering detailed instructions;
- (iv) You have difficulty in seeing or hearing;
- (v) You have difficulty tolerating some physical feature(s) of certain

work settings, e.g., you cannot tolerate dust or fumes; or

- (vi) You have difficulty performing the manipulative or postural functions of some work such as reaching, handling, stooping, climbing, crawling, or crouching.

(2) If your impairment(s) and related symptoms, such as pain, only affect your ability to perform the non-exertional aspects of work-related activities, the rules in appendix 2 do not direct factual conclusions of disabled or not disabled. The determination as to whether disability exists will be based on the principles in the appropriate sections of the regulations, giving consideration to the rules for specific case situations in appendix 2.

(d) *Combined exertional and non-exertional limitations.* When the limitations and restrictions imposed by your impairment(s) and related symptoms, such as pain, affect your ability to meet both the strength and demands of jobs other than the strength demands, we consider that you have a combination of exertional and nonexertional limitations or restrictions. If your impairment(s) and related symptoms, such as pain, affect your ability to meet both the strength and demands of jobs other than the strength demands, we will not directly apply the rules in appendix 2 unless there is a rule that directs a conclusion that you are disabled based upon your strength limitations; otherwise the rules provide a framework to guide our decision.

[56 FR 57947, Nov. 14, 1991, as amended at 68 FR 51166, Aug. 26, 2003]

#### SUBSTANTIAL GAINFUL ACTIVITY

##### §416.971 General.

The work, without regard to legality, that you have done during any period in which you believe you are disabled may show that you are able to work at the substantial gainful activity level. If you are able to engage in substantial gainful activity, we will find that you are not disabled. (We explain the rules for persons who are statutorily blind in §416.984.) Even if the work you have done was not substantial gainful activity, it may show that you are able to do more work than you actually did. We will consider all of the medical and